



Americas Regional Forum on  
conflict prevention and  
the protection of the  
human rights of minorities

27 -28 April, 2021 | ONLINE MEETING



## **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE AMERICAS REGIONAL FORUM**

### *Implementation of and Education about Human Rights, Minority Rights and Indigenous Rights*

1. The UN and its agencies, including regional offices, should promote the implementation of all international instruments related to minority rights, indigenous rights and racial discrimination.
2. UN agencies, including OHCHR regional offices, should carry out training activities to educate staff members on minority rights and the rights of indigenous peoples.
3. International and regional human rights treaty bodies monitoring compliance with human rights should ensure the independence of their members and have a more active commitment to minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants. In compliance with Article 9 of the UNDM, these treaty bodies should incorporate the existing international and regional minority, indigenous, and Afro-descendants rights frameworks into their work.
4. The Human Rights Council should monitor the situation of minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants under attack more emphatically and encourage the UN General Assembly to act in the same manner.
5. States should incorporate internationally agreed minority rights, such as Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (UNDM) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) within their domestic laws and programmes.
6. In particular, states should guarantee the economic, social, and cultural rights of minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants, in accordance with the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).
7. States should respect, protect, and fulfill human rights contained in international instruments, including those focusing on combating racial discrimination with particular attention paid to the intersection of racism and violence against women, such as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Declaration of Santiago, Declaration of Durban, Inter-American Democratic Charter and the prospective Draft Inter-American Convention against Racism and All forms of Discrimination and Intolerance.
8. The implementation of minority and indigenous rights need to be embedded in appropriate foundational policies and legislative changes in order to establish strong anti-racism principles and the protection of minority and indigenous identities. This includes renouncing all colonial doctrines of superiority in law, and enacting these renouncements.
9. States should allow and facilitate access to the UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Rapporteurship on the Rights of Afro-Descendants and against Racial Discrimination of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and other relevant Special Procedures of the UN Human Rights Council, the

OHCHR, and the IACHR to investigate relevant cases, including violence towards minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants, and to seek a solution to the problem.

10. States should comply with precautionary, provisional, and urgent measures, and decisions of the Inter-American System of Human Rights in response to repeated attacks on and human rights violations of minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants, such as in the case of *Acosta et al. v. Nicaragua of 25 March 2017*.
11. States should develop and implement programs to educate citizens, public servants, and the private and financial sectors about fundamental human rights, and about the specific rights of minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants.
12. States should ensure that such educational programs provide minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants with the specific knowledge and tools to fully realize their human rights and effectively participate in society.

#### *Combatting Inequality and Discrimination, and Intersectionality*

13. States should recognize that inequalities faced by minorities, indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, including intersecting forms of discrimination experienced by LGBT people and women, are fundamental causes of contemporary conflicts, which disproportionately affect these groups.
14. States should work to combat discrimination, stereotypes, stigma, and colonialist attitudes in relation to minorities, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants to facilitate the observance of human rights and the prevention of conflicts.
15. States should make discrimination against the Roma minority visible through data collection. This data should be used to develop specific public policies to address this discrimination with the participation of representatives of the Roma minority.
16. The media should refrain from spreading negative stereotypes and worsening tensions in relation to minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants.

#### *Recognizing and Accommodating Ethnocultural Diversity*

17. States should recognize the diversity of their populations and the specific identities, rights, and interests of minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants. States should enact laws and implement public policies that protect, respect, and promote this diversity of groups and within groups.
18. States should implement interventions, including special measures, that are tailored to the needs of minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants to ensure the protection of minority and indigenous rights, prevent conflicts, and provide redress to historically neglected and disadvantaged groups.

#### *Ensuring Effective Participation in Public, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Life*

19. International, regional, and domestic political and human rights bodies should ensure the participation and cooperation of minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants in the development and implementation of any political, legal, and rights framework that provides protection from and redress for conflict to ensure understanding of the historical, cultural and structural considerations that must be taken into account, and that prevention measures and reparations are sustainable and do not contribute to further rights violations or re-victimization.

20. States should ensure that national processes and institutions should be developed and include the participation of minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants, and that they are not externally imposed upon these groups.
21. States should ensure participation and representation in political, economic, social, and cultural life for minorities, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants.
22. States should develop electoral measures that guarantee the political participation of minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants, and the rights to elect, be elected and access public office, coupled with the recognition and respect of their traditions, cultures, religions and languages.
23. States should increase political participation for minorities, indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants within the political system, in parliaments, civil service, and public bodies.
24. States should ensure effective participation, consultation, and cooperation of civil society and representatives of minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants in the development of national programs and strategies on health, education, justice and other areas in accordance with international standards, such as the UNDM, the UNDRIP, International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169, and the ICESCR.
25. States should enact programs and strategies, with the participation and cooperation of civil society and representatives of minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants, to improve the economic participation of these groups, including vocational training, promotion of women's economic autonomy, gender equality and empowerment of women, and the promotion of traditional livelihoods.
26. States should develop and finance bilateral and multilateral technical cooperation programs and projects that aim to address the social and economic situation of minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants. These programs and projects should pay special attention to youth, women, the elderly, and people with disabilities, and should be culturally, religiously and linguistically relevant to these groups. In order to ensure that funds reach the designated communities, these programs and projects must be transparent, including monitoring mechanisms.
27. States should ensure that minorities, indigenous peoples and Afro-Descendants are represented in national human rights institutions (NHRIs) responsible for receiving complaints about violations, and for developing policies and strategies aimed at protecting and assisting these groups; States should ensure that these institutions are free from political biases and abuse of power, and that minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants are included and represented in their staff.

#### *Educating about Minorities, Roma, Indigenous Peoples and Afro-Descendants*

28. States should ensure education in public schools about the history and culture of minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants living in their territory.
29. States should train public officials on the history and culture of minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants living in their territory.
30. States should ensure that knowledge-production on the history, society and culture of minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants is decolonised and the predominant Eurocentric perspective removed. Knowledge-production and education on the history, society and culture of these groups should be developed by and with their effective participation.

31. States should conduct educational and public awareness campaigns aimed at transforming the political culture of discrimination and exclusion against minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants within political systems.
32. States should formally recognize, teach the history of, and commemorate the genocide of the Jewish and Roma minorities that took place during World War II as part of the Holocaust. Any prevention of continuing discrimination and prevention of future genocide needs to be based on the recognition of past atrocities.

#### Land/Environment

33. States should prevent discrimination against minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants with respect to their right to buy, own, and sell property, and the forced evictions of indigenous peoples from their land.
34. States should ensure consultative processes and guarantee effective dialogue with minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants when issues related to land and the environment arise. Any decisions related to the ownership and use of lands traditionally owned and inhabited by these groups should be human rights-based.
35. States should apply the political and legal framework for environmental protection taking into account the value of land for minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants; normative frameworks should be guided by the ethno-development of minorities, Roma indigenous peoples and afro-descendants.

#### Health

36. Discriminatory state-responses to an epidemic, such as Covid 19, further marginalizing minorities can be a source of tension and conflict. States should apply special measures sensitive to the cultures of minority groups and their social conditions.

#### Religion

37. States should guarantee freedom of religion and belief, and prevent religious discrimination, including atrocities committed against denominations particular to Afro-descendants and other minorities.

#### Access to Justice

38. International and regional human rights bodies should provide minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants with effective recourse to address grievances and provide an early resolution to potential conflicts. Existing mechanisms include the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination's Urgent Action Procedure, UN Special Rapporteurs on minority issues and the rights of indigenous peoples, and OAS Rapporteurship on the Rights of Persons of African Descent and against Racial Discrimination.
39. In situations of conflict, states should conduct effective, independent and impartial investigations to establish truth and ensure accountability for the violations and abuses committed, and identify, prosecute and hold criminally accountable those responsible.

#### Combating Violence

40. States should work to disarm violent groups and protect minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants from illegal and violent acts, including armed attacks.

#### Data Collection

41. States should collect disaggregated data on minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants to inform the development of specific public policies. At the same time, states must ensure that such data is not used to further discriminate against such groups.
42. States should collect, analyze and publish relevant, comparable and updated quantitative and qualitative data on the political, social, and economic conditions of minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants, including on the discrimination and violence faced by these groups.

#### Conflict Prevention Measures

43. States should develop, implement, and strengthen programs to analyze the root causes and elements of conflicts, in order to analyze and develop policies for the early prevention of such conflicts.
44. States should develop tools and plans for observing and monitoring risk factors for conflicts based on identity, and for implementing practical political solutions for maintaining a stable environment, mitigating risks, and increasing the ability to detect and respond to threats in their early stages.
45. Political actions of preventive diplomacy should be linked with long-term capacity building within countries, including education on the rights of minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants, at different levels of government and within civil society and communities to allow for effective dialogue.
46. Regional intergovernmental and civil society organizations should provide states assistance to develop their own “early warning systems”, and to understand which policies exacerbate conflict and what kind of policies could reduce or mitigate the escalation of conflict with the active engagement of minorities, Roma, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants to contribute to conflict prevention.
47. Key social actors at all levels (from the local to global level) should strengthen transnational cooperation to promote collaboration and joint strategies for conflict prevention.